

# The Acts of the Holy Spirit

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

Keith Chuvala, [Keith@BackToTheBibleCatechism.com](mailto:Keith@BackToTheBibleCatechism.com)

## ...In Jerusalem

1. A request from a paralyzed beggar ([3:1-3](#))
2. Peter's response ([3:4-6](#))
3. The healing of the man ([3:7-10](#))
4. Peter's second sermon ([3:11-26](#))

Peter and John were both commissioned by Jesus and recognized by the early Christians as apostles – special ambassadors of Jesus. Acts 2:43 told us that many signs and wonders were done through the apostles. Acts 3 recounts a specific example.

### **A request from a paralyzed beggar**

The hour of prayer: the ninth hour; the same hour when Jesus cried “It is finished!” from the cross (John 19:30). Coincidence?

The gate of the temple which is called Beautiful: Flavius Josephus (a Jewish historian of the mid-late first century) described this gate on the temple mount as being made of fine Corinthian brass, seventy-five feet high with huge double doors.

The lame man asked only to be supported in the condition that he was in. There's no indication that he perceived that God would (or wanted to!) completely change his condition.

Begging at the Beautiful gate made sense; people travelling through that area would likely provide the support he sought; in Judaism there was a tradition of giving to the poor, especially beggars, as an act of righteousness.

### **Peter's Response**

Fixing his eyes on him: This is not random; the Holy Spirit is preparing the scene for what is about to happen. The beggar was probably encouraged when Peter and John looked at him directly and intently. Just like today, most people ignore beggars and are careful to not make eye contact with them. When Peter directed his attention to him, he probably thought he had a big contribution coming!

Silver and gold I do not have: What Peter did have was authority from Jesus to heal the sick. Peter already knew what it was like to have God use him to heal others, because Jesus had trained him in this (Luke 9:1-6).

In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth: It's interesting that Peter mentions Nazareth here. While "Jesus" (Yeshua) may have been a common name, the title of "Christ" was certainly unique.

### **The healing of the lame man**

This wasn't something Peter did on a whim, or as grand-standing; he did it under the specific prompting of the Holy Spirit. God gave Peter the ability in this situation to trust Him completely.

Immediately his feet and bones received strength: This strength came to the lame man when Peter said "rise up and walk," and took him by the hand to lift him up.

Here Luke employs the jargon of a physician; he offers a rather medical description of what happened in and to this man. The words translated as "feet" and "ankle bones" are only used by Luke, and occur nowhere else in scripture. These words indicate a discrimination between different parts of the human heel.

Walking, leaping, and praising God: As soon as he was healed, the formerly lame man did three good things. First, he attached himself to the apostles. Second, he immediately started to use what God had given him (walking, leaping). Finally, he began to praise and worship God.

They knew that it was he who sat begging alms: Here we see God's perfect timing at play. The beggar was at least 40 years old (Acts 4:22), and had been crippled since birth. He was a familiar sight at this temple gate (Acts 3:10). Therefore, it's entirely likely that Jesus Himself passed him by many times *without healing him*. Jesus healed countless others, but this man's healing was reserved in human history for this time and this purpose!

### **Peter's second sermon**

Peter wisely took advantage of the gathering crowd. Yet he knew that the phenomenon of the miraculous in itself brought no one to Jesus, it merely drew them in to hear the Gospel. Peter knew that saving faith did not come by seeing or hearing about miracles. Rather, "faith comes by hearing..." (Romans 10:17).

There are evangelists even today who give the impression that healing happens because they are so spiritual, so close to God, or so godly. Peter would not let any such impression stand; he knew that it was all Jesus and not him.

The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: By opening with this reference to God, Peter made it clear that he spoke to them about the God of Israel, the God represented in the Hebrew Scriptures.

His Servant Jesus: Peter's sermon is it all about Jesus. The focus on the sermon was not on Peter nor on anything he did, but all about Jesus.

Whom you delivered up and denied: A familiar refrain; pointing out sinful man's need for a Savior. Peter boldly set the guilt of Jesus' death squarely where it belonged. Remember that Pilate, the Roman governor, was determined to let Him go, but the Jewish mob insisted on the crucifixion of Jesus (John 18:29-19:16).

This does not mean that the Jewish people of that day alone were responsible for the death of Jesus. The Romans – Gentiles – were also responsible. The Romans would not have crucified Jesus without pressure from the Jewish leaders, and the Jews could not have crucified Jesus without Roman acceptance of it. God made certain that both Jew and Gentile shared in the guilt of Jesus' death. It was not political intrigue or circumstances that put Jesus on the cross; it was our sin.

Holy One: Here Peter exalts Jesus as God. The term "Holy One" is used more than 40 times in the Old Testament as a high and glorious title for Yahweh, the God of Israel.

I know that you did it in ignorance: Peter recognized they called for the execution of Jesus in abject ignorance of God's eternal plan. This did not make them innocent, but it did carefully define the nature of their guilt. A sin committed out of ignorance is still sin.

Repent: As he did in his first sermon (Acts 2:38), Peter called upon the crowd to repent. He told them to turn around in their thinking and actions.

The importance of repentance is not so much in feeling sorry for our sin, as it is about the act of a heart turning towards God in faith. Just as he used it in chapter 2, here also Peter made "repent" a word of hope. He told them that they had done wrong; but that they could turn it around and become right with God.

And be converted: Being a Christian is not "turning over a new leaf," it is being a new creation in Christ Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:17).